

The Comfort Women Controversy (cont.)

Korea vs. Taiwan



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Why does Korea lament its colonial history while Taiwan highlights favorable aspects of the Japanese colonial experience?

- The Comfort Women controversy in spite of its alleged “settlement” in December 2015 continues to divide Korea and Japan. The Japanese Government provided 1 Billion Japanese Yen (US \$8million) as prescribed by the accord between the two governments in order to establish a center to promote healing and likewise to provide financial support to the remaining 45 surviving Korean women who self-identify as “comfort women.” 34 of those women have accepted the compensation provided by the Korean government and yet, contrary to its commitment to work on the removal of the comfort women statue located in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul, a second comfort women statue has now been placed in front of the Japanese Consulate in Pusan, Seoul’s second largest city. This has led to the withdrawal of both the Japanese ambassador to Korea and the Consul General in Pusan.
- This research looks at Taiwan, the one other Japanese colony that provided Comfort Women to Japan during World War II. Acknowledging that no comfort women statues exist in Taiwan, this research attempts to gain insights into the reason for the discrepancy between the Taiwanese and the Korean historical memory of colonization under Japan.
- **Research Question:** *Why does Taiwan view its colonial history under Japan differently than Korea?*
- **Working hypothesis:** *It stems from Taiwan's historical experiences prior to or following Japanese rule.*

Surviving Korean Comfort Women→

The Case for the Korean Narrative.



In the case of Korea, since 1990 when this issue came to the attention of the public, 192 women have come forward, self-identifying as Comfort Women. Korean civil society and the Korean government estimate the total number of women forced into the Comfort Station system as over 200,000 and strongly suggest that the vast majority of these women were Korean. Korea was forcibly annexed into the Japanese imperial system in 1910 through the signing of the Eul-Sa Treaty of protection that is viewed by the vast majority of Koreans as an act of Treason. Korean ill feeling towards Japan precedes this period, most notably because of the assassination of Queen Min of Korea in 1895. 81% of Koreans were forced to replace their Korean names with Japanese names during the period of colonization and the Korean language was supplanted with Japanese. Koreans were also obliged to participate in Japanese Emperor worship..

Statute honoring Japanese leader Yoichi Hatta→

The Case for the Taiwan Narrative..



In the case of Taiwan since 1945 some 52 women have come forward self-identifying as Comfort Women. Dr. Chu Te-lan, the most respected Taiwanese authority on this topic estimates that the total number of Taiwanese conscripted at 1000 and the foremost Taiwanese support groups estimates the number at “more than 2,000.” Taiwan was annexed by Japan following the Sino-Japanese war and the Treaty of Shimonoseki whereby Taiwan was ceded to Japan. No major Taiwanese leader was assassinated by Japan (as in Korea’s case). Only 7% of Taiwanese exchanged their Taiwanese or Chinese names for Japanese names but Japanese was imposed as the official language. Like Koreans, the Taiwanese were forced to participate in Emperor worship..

Anti-Japan Demonstration in Korea→

What motivates current Korean Attitudes towards Japan...



Korean President Park Geun-Hye is in an impeachment proceeding, the key to the December 28th Agreement. Koreans feel that the Japanese have been evasive and disingenuous in accepting responsibility for the forced sex trafficking of Korean women and girls throughout World War II. “Japanophobia” serves as a rallying point in a Korea divided in so many other ways. Key Korean civil society organizations and politicians have become spoilers.

Taiwanese offer annual bows, prayers and flowers to Japan's Yoichi Hatta.→

What is the view of Japanese Colonialism in Taiwan today...



Since the end of World War II, Taiwan has been reliant on Japan as one of its guarantors Against the threat of the People's Republic of China. Taiwan media and the government highlight the contributions from Japan during the colonial period, something that Korea does not do. Taiwanese civil society organizations, critical of Japan's handling of the comfort women problem are subject to public scorn. Taiwan suffered under Chiang Kai-shek, a non-Taiwanese dictator, more than under Japan.